

VZCZCXRO0564
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #0087 0121608
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 121608Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5184
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000087

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/11/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PINR](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: TALABANI ON RESTARTING THE 3+1 AND MODERATING
KURDISH PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih on January 9 met with the Ambassador on the occasion of Talabani's return to Baghdad from the Kurdistan region. Talabani said he is ready to move forward on the 3 1 mechanism now that all the principals are back in Baghdad. He said he and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani had agreed the previous week in Erbil that Iraqi Kurdish leaders would keep their public statements strictly in line with U.S. policy, and to drop their suggested changes to the hydrocarbon law in order to restart movement on the draft that passed the Council of Ministers last February. End summary.

[¶2.](#) (C) Talabani declared readiness to move forward on the 3 1. Visible political progress in his view is necessary by the end of January, and Barzani is prepared to fly to Baghdad whenever necessary to join the meetings. Talabani sought the Ambassador's guidance on what the group should discuss. The Ambassador conveyed Prime Minister Maliki's suggestion that the 3 1 should discuss the negotiating team for the long-term security agreement with the U.S., and also suggested that the group discuss how to institutionalize the 3 1 meetings. Barham Salih said National Security Advisor Muwaffaq al-Rubaie had suggested a secretariat for the 3 1, which would include Rubaie, Salih, and Presidency Council chief of staff Naseer al-Ani and would prepare issues for discussion to lend structure to the 3 1.

[¶3.](#) (C) The President said during his visit to Erbil he and Barzani had agreed no Kurdish official, especially Barzani, would make any statement contradicting Washington's Iraq policy. Barzani allegedly promised to refrain from public comment on foreign affairs -- including with regard to Turkey -- and to leave these issues to Baghdad. The Iraqi Kurdish leadership would cooperate with Turkey against the PKK, according to Talabani, and to this end an unspecified KRG representative continued to meet weekly with TNIO chief Emre Taner.

[¶4.](#) (C) Talabani discussed the prospects for legislative progress, acknowledging this would be necessary to shore up support in Washington for continued engagement in Iraq. He and Barzani had also agreed to abandon their two outstanding quibbles with the hydrocarbon draft that passed the Council of Ministers in February, and endorse the agreed-upon draft in its entirety. Barham Salih noted the mood in the COR is positive at the moment, and that he had received a standing ovation the day before following his presentation on the proposed 2008 budget. Minister of Trade Abd al-Falah al-Sudani, on the other hand, had been "torn to pieces" during the same session, a reflection in both Salih's and Talabani's opinions of the fact that Sudani is a good man but a failure in his job. Finally, Talabani was optimistic about the imminent passage of de-Ba'athification reform, dismissing Sadrism opposition by saying "the Sadrists object to everything."

15. (C) Talabani addressed his recent comments on the 1975 Algiers Accord between Iraq and Iran. He said his intent was not unilaterally to abrogate the treaty, but rather to scrap the many dated agreements on the Iraq-Iran border in favor of a new understanding. He noted that former Iranian President Khatami wishes to visit Iraq to meet with Talabani, and that the split between the camps of President Ahmadi-Nejad and former President Rafsanjani is widening.

CROCKER